the Central Government are required to prepare Action Plans and encourage the State Governments/UT Administrations to undertake similar action.

Illegal trade of tigers

309. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of tigers in India show an alarming decline as the tiger has big value in medicine market;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Chinese Medicine Market (TCM) is driving the poaching boom as every part of the tiger from tail to whiskers has a market; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to curb the trade and save the tiger?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) There is a report of disappearance of tigers from the Sariska Tiger Reserve, and a decline in tiger population in the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve from 35 in 2001-02 to 26 in 2005 as reported by the State (Rajasthan). While no further reports of decline in tiger population in tiger reserves has been received from States, the ongoing All India Estimation of tiger, copredators and prey animals using the refined methodology approved by the Tiger Task Force, would provide the factual status of tiger population in the country including National Parks, Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves.

(b) and (c) No such report has come to notice. However steps taken by the Government of India for conservation of wild animals including tiger are given in the Statement (*see* below).

Statement

Measures taken for Tiger Conservation by Government of India

1. **Ongoing Funding Schemes:**

   Funding and technical help are provided to States under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of "Project Tiger", "Assistance to National Parks & Sanctuaries" and "Project Elephant" for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of States to provide effective protection to wild animals including tiger.

2. **Legal Measures Taken:**

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which has been amended and made more stringent.

(ii) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders, (iii) The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 has been enacted, which has come into force w.e.f. 4.9.2006. This provides for constituting the "National Tiger Conservation Authority" and the "Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau". The National Tiger Conservation Authority has also been constituted w.e.f. 4.9.2006.

3. **Administrative and other Measures:**

(i) A National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-16) has been adopted by the Indian Board for Wildlife under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister in January 2002, which outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

(ii) Government of India has set-up regional and subregional offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

4. **International Conventions:**

India is signatory to many international conventions relating to biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

5. **Bilateral Agreements:**

India has bilateral agreements with Nepal and China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

6. **Global Tiger Forum:**

A Global Tiger Forum of tiger range countries has been created for addressing international issues relating to tiger conservation.

7. **Initiatives Taken for eliciting public support:**

- Complementary inputs for Ecodevelopment and voluntary village relocation provided earlier in separate projects have now been merged with Project Tiger as an "Umbrella Scheme".
- An externally aided project for "Biodiversity Conservation and Rural Livelihood Improvement" is under preparation for implementation in six selected landscapes within the country.

8. **Other Initiatives Taken:**

- Eight more potential sites have been identified for Project Tiger coverage.
- "Project Allowance" has been provided under the scheme to field staff working in tiger reserves.
- Regional Monitoring of Tiger Reserves has been done by a group of experts as per the normative standards of the Ministry which has been peer reviewed by the IUCN. Both the evaluation and peer review have been placed in the Parliament.
- 100% Central Assistance is provided for deploying anti-poaching strike squads in Tiger Reserves, apart from expenditure relating to research, veterinary, monitoring and evaluation, compensation to the legal heir of staff/person killed while performing duty, and for monitoring of tiger population.
- Information and communication technology is under use for linking important tiger reserves in the GIS Domain for evolving a management support system and crime detection, dissemination of information through web and evolving a 'National Tiger Monitoring and Habitat Evaluation System' with regional protocols.
- The allocation under Project Tiger has been enhanced from Rs. 7500 lakhs in the Ninth Plan to Rs. 15,000 lakhs in the Tenth Plan.

- Country level appraisal of habitat fragmentation has been done to facilitate restorative inputs.
- All India comparative assessment of forest cover status in tiger reserves and their surrounding areas upto a radius of ten kms. has been carried out in collaboration with Forest Survey of India.
- All India Assessment of Tiger status (mapping of tiger presence, breeding units, habitat quality at the taluk level resolution) in the GIS domain has been carried out in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India.

Damage to agriculture by tuskers in Goa

310. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether increasing instances of wild tuskers intruding in the territory of Goa from the border States of Karnataka and Maharashtra causing immense damage to the agriculture and even threatening the lives of villagers, have come to the notice of Government.

(b) the number of such incidents of damage to agriculture, have taken place in Goa;

(c) whether the Government of Goa have taken steps to curb the menace with the help of Central Authorities, the Governments of Karnataka and Maharashtra;

(d) whether there is any Central Scheme to compensate farmers in such circumstances; and

(e) if so, the assistance given under the scheme so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per reports received from the State Government occasional incidence of crop damage has taken place in Goa since the year 2003. On receipt of the report from the State Government in the year 2006, Ministry constituted a Committee to inspect the area and to hold meeting with State officials from Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka and to